



ALLIANCE FOR VULNERABLE MISSION

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Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin

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Editor: Jim Harries, PhD, Chairman of the AVM



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The Alliance for Vulnerable Mission encourages some missionaries from the West to engage in their ministries using local languages and resources.

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Towards a North American AVM Network

The AVM (Alliance for Vulnerable Mission) is 12 years old. To date, it operates as a ‘global’ alliance. Some of us want to strengthen the specifically American-component. The AVM advocates that some Western missionaries should carry out their ministries in the majority world using local languages and resources.



The NAMS (North American Missions Ship) is off course. To change the course of NAMS – to reconceive and reconfigure NAMS as something other than an old-style ocean liner that won’t turn at a hurricane never mind on a sixpence – will take a lot of work, beginning and continuing with a lot of prayer. A few of us since

mid-2018 have been talking about creating a website as a place for AVM-minded people in North America to interact with. Then we need to act. We’ve made some preliminary decisions, written a few things for the website,

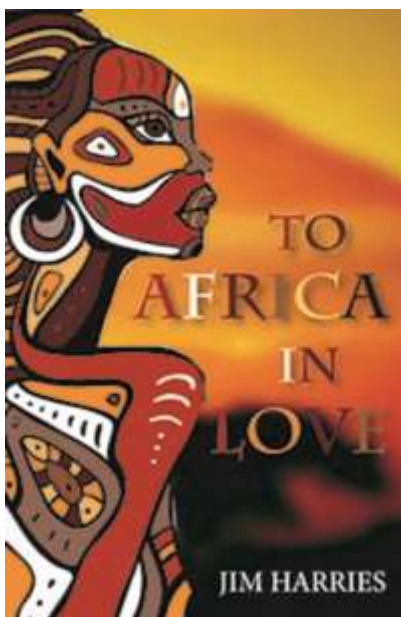
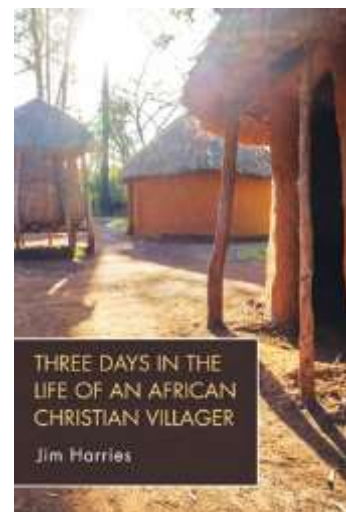
reserved a domain name. Our first need is prayer. We also need more AVM-minded people who will contribute their knowledge, energy and vision to changing the course of NAMS. If you are one of those American people, please write to me at the email address below.

Fred Lewis

Member of the AVM (global) Executive Board

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- One of Jim's books, **Three Days in the Life of an African Christian Villager**, a short fictional account of 'real' life in an African village, has been republished so is back in print. Order your copy [here](#). Here is the amazon review of this book: "This book bursts like a breath of fresh air into the reader's mind. What it promises, it gives - a fascinating insight into life in an African village as seen and interpreted by a Christian man. We are privileged to be given a penetrating glimpse of life for this man over just three days - three days packed with work, domestic life and family problems, and church services, including funerals (ever-present in Africa). I commend this book to anyone teaching or studying missiology, but also to anyone interested in mission work."



- Jim's latest novel is now out! This is a *Romance*, that at the same time teaches about mission, about how to relate cross culturally, and about how not to do things in Africa. It tells, indirectly, in fictional form, a bit about the life and ministry of Jim Harries. (One has to use fiction in order to tell truths that are otherwise too sensitive.) Order your copy [here](#) for just £8.99. (Not yet available over Amazon.)

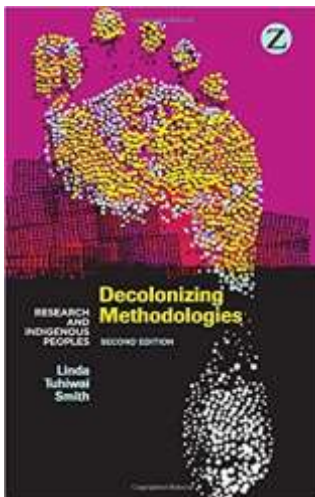
- See here for some ‘live’ discussion sessions on academia.edu:

[An innovative approach to cross-cultural training.](#)

[A rant on the folly of the West in Mission and Development](#)

[A suggestion that; Witchcraft saves-lives in Africa](#)

- [The Easter Story you have never heard of](#) ... take a look at this, by Craig Greenfield. “This Easter, I'd like to offer another way to understand what Jesus did on the cross. We live in a world racked with more and more violence. (I live in a country that lost more than a million citizens to a brutal civil war - not to mention hundreds of thousands of deaths by American bombs). But as Christians, we haven't always offered a Christlike nonviolent alternative. Which is super SAD, because what Jesus did at Easter was the ULTIMATE act in God's plan to overcome violence in the world. There are heaps and heaps of theories about what the cross meant. These atonement theories have sometimes fallen short of describing what happened. Frankly it's a mystery that I struggle to comprehend. But this Easter let's look at the cross from another angle. One with huge ramifications for how we walk in the world. This perspective goes all the way back to the earliest Christians. But it speaks directly to our world today.” [Continued ...](#)



- This book, that seems to have spawned much interest over the last 20 years, looks at how to do research from an indigenous perspective. Title: **Decolonising Methodologies: research and indigenous peoples.** (Get a free pdf of this book [here.](#))

For a review by Jim Harries: “I found myself nodding in approval as I read this book. Smith has a sufficient understanding of the intricacies of options in research methodology to titillate the experts. I found myself thinking that her level of understanding was impressive for an indigenous Maori. My joy was dampened when I realised that underlying her text is really a clear message: ‘you Western researchers aren't helping us. Get out of the way, and let us indigenous people research ourselves’. My heart sank. I would love for there to be more

intimate involvement of Western people with indigenous minorities and majorities. Smith tells us repeatedly that indigenous people are tired of being abused by Western people in the name of ‘research’. Westerners should read this book. It declares a failure of the West” [... continued](#)

- UK conference planned for December 2019, title:

Title: **Missionaries: aliens, providers, or fellow travellers?**

Strapline: Should the majority world be the target of patronage from rich missionaries?

Any potential speakers please write to me at jim@vulnerablemission.org



- To be held at All Nations Christian College, Ware, Herts, UK. Sunday 8th December 2019 5 pm, to Wednesday 11th December 2019, 1 pm. (*see call for papers below*).

Call for papers

2019 Conference: Missionaries: aliens, providers, or fellow travellers?

Location: All Nations Christian College, Ware, Herts, UK.
Dates / times Sunday 8th December 5 pm to Wednesday 11th December 1 pm.

Should the majority world be the target of patronage from rich missionaries?

Submit abstracts asap to jim@vulnerablemission.org

Outline paragraph: Outside Christian workers who build on foreign presuppositions in work amongst indigenous communities can, especially when foreign funded and using outside languages, be interpreted as riding roughshod over indigenous sensibilities. True empowerment of local people requires getting alongside them. This necessitates vulnerability to their position and context. Such vulnerability can best be achieved if one shares the Gospel using indigenous languages utilising local resources.

We will be discussing issues such as:

<p>Practicalities and ramifications of use of indigenous languages by Western missionaries.</p> <p>How does translation into an indigenous language (and from an indigenous language) affect the fronting of the gospel and of missionary work in general?</p> <p>While finances are needed for mission work, how can one ensure that finances do not dominate one's mission work?</p> <p>What are the good practices that ensure a missionary's vulnerability to local context(s)?</p> <p>How to engage in mission without exuding (excessive) power.</p> <p>Organisation structures that enable vulnerability on the side of Western missionaries on the ground.</p> <p>Helping Churches who want to engage directly in mission cross culturally to avoid pitfalls of power.</p> <p>Tentmaking and business as mission models that leave the Westerner vulnerable.: How can the commercial world be used to engage in mission without promoting 'evils' of capitalism?</p> <p>When the uneven spread of wealth is itself an injustice, how can one use one's surplus to enact global justice.:</p>	<p>How do we utilise all global media channels to promote vulnerability in our missionary endeavour?</p> <p>Is vulnerability the key to contextualisation?</p> <p>Theology traditionally draws strongly on metaphor. In the majority world, local metaphors are unfamiliar to the West. How can one then engage theology interculturally?</p> <p>When politics and 'religion' are not separate categories, missionaries need to be careful not to get bogged down in unanticipated conflicts.</p> <p>Is miracle a post-enlightenment category? Is 'magic' simply a normal prerequisite of human social existence. What does this imply for cross cultural missionary engagement?</p> <p>Is introduction of outside technology implicitly exploitative and enslaving? Or is it liberating? How does technology impact vulnerable mission; positive, negative, releasing, enslaving?</p> <p>How can Global-localisation be a springboard for vulnerable mission?</p> <p>When short-term mission has become poverty-travels intended to adorn facebook with images of charity – what is the way forward?</p> <p>Can Westerners relate to non-Western missionaries without dominating them?</p> <p>While the bible is God's inspired book, are Western curriculum?</p>
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